Marriage - Thos. Lincoln
+ Sarah Bush Lincoln

Drawer 1 Father - Thomas Lincoln

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Thomas Lincoln Family

Marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

71.2009.085.03574

MARRIAGE OF THOMAS LINCOLN AND SARAH BUSH JOHNSTON
December 2, 1819
Elizabethtown, Ky.

Thomas Lincoln was married to Miss Nancy Hanks on June 12, 1806. To this union was born Sarah and Abraham. On October 5, 1818 Nancy Lincoln died and after more than a year Thomas returned to Kentucky to marry Sarah Bush Johnston, widow of Daniel Johnston, who had been jailer of Hardin County.

The Marriage took place where Marion's Garage is now located. The wedding was conducted in a log home by the Reverend Mr. George L. Rogers a minister of the Methodist Church. At the time Sarah Lincoln was eleven and Abraham was nine years of age. The widow had three children and provided a good home not only for her own but for the step children. From that home environment there "grew a president who made Sarah Lincoln the most famous step mother in all the world."

During this year the nation has observed the sesquicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth by re-enacting scenes from his life. This marriage of his father and step mother is one of the important moments of a life filled with great hours. We are happy to have this simple observance as a reminder of the life of a man who came from the soil of Kentucky and made such great contributions to the thinking of the world.

Taking part in the wedding ceremony will be;

Thomas Lincoln ----- Mr. Lewis Hall
Sarah Bush Johnston ----- Mrs. Lewis Hall

William Brumfield ----- W. Burton Cowley
(Brother-in-law of Thomas Lincoln)
Nancy Lincoln Brumfield ----- Mrs. W. Burton Cowley
(Sister of Thomas Lincoln)

Rev. Mr. George L. Rogers ----- Rev. Wm. Slider

Following the brief ceremony, Dr. Louis A. Warren, one of the foremost authorities on Lincoln's life will speak in the Fellowship Hall.

LINCOLN-JOHNSTON MARRIAGE LICENSE—1819

The Hardin County Clerk's office at Elizabethtown, Kentucky, now has on exhibit the original marriage license of Thomas Lincoln, the father of Abraham Lincoln, and Sarah Bush Johnston his second wife.

The license was re-discovered on March 16, 1959 by Mrs. Edmund Richerson of Elizabethtown, who was engaged in historical research on another topic. The document was written on a small piece of paper and is dated December 2, 1819. It bears the signature of Samuel Haycraft, Jr., Clerk of the Hardin County Court. A tracing of the original document made by Henry Whitney Cleveland first appeared in the book by Ida M. Tarbell and J. McCan Davis "The Early Life of Abraham Lincoln", S. S. McClure, New York—London, 1896, page 51. The manuscript is as follows:

"State of Kentucky, Hardin County Court

"To any authorized minister of the Gospel or authorized-Magistrate these are licence & permit you to join together in the Honorable State of Matrimony according to the rules & customs of the church or religion you are reported a member of *viz* Thomas Lincoln and Mrs. Sarah Johnston he the said Thomas Lincoln having given hand & security in my office according to law: Given under my hand as clerk of the County Court for the County aforesaid the 2nd day of December 1819 and the 28th year of the Commonwealth

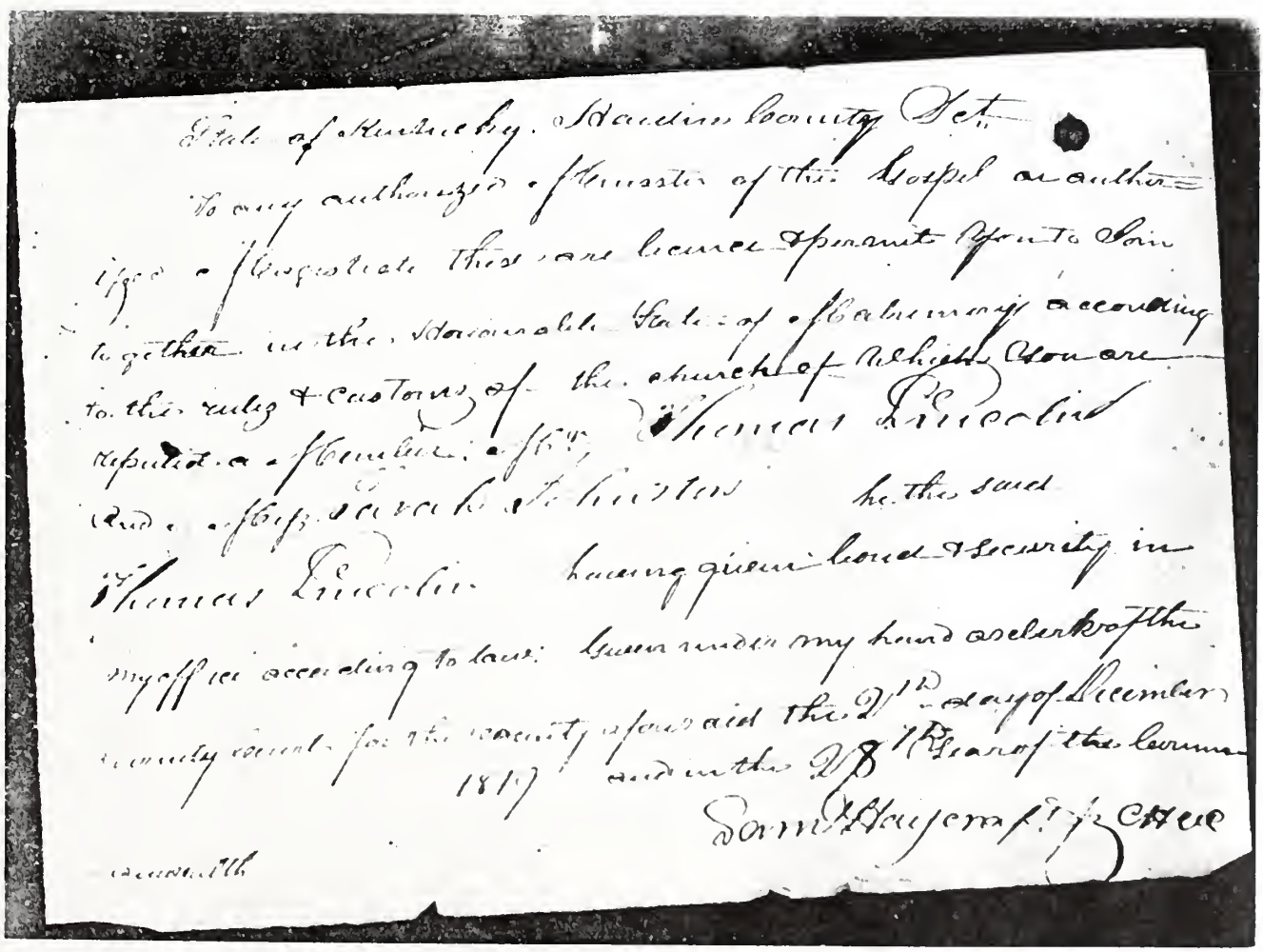
Samuel Haycraft, Jr. CHCC"

On the reverse side of the license is the return of the minister, George L. Rogers stating that the marriage took place the same day the license was issued:

"Executed the within by joining in matrimony the persons therein named. December 2nd 1819. George L. Rogers"

The document was folded into three sections and on the back of the license is written: "Clerk of Hardin Marriage License Thomas Lincoln Recorded in book B."

For some years in the Hardin County Clerk's office there has been exhibited the marriage bond of Thomas Lincoln, dated December 2, 1819. This bond bears the signature of the father of the Sixteenth President along with that of his brother-in-law Christopher Bush who acted as surety.



Original Lincoln-Johnston marriage license on exhibit in the Hardin County Court House at Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

Thomas Lincoln and Sara Bush Johnston

He Paid Her Debts, And They Were Married

By MRS. T. D. WINSTEAD

Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the United States, had many associations with Elizabethtown and Hardin County. They extended for a 20-year period from about 1796 to 1816 when he took his family to Indiana to live.

Carpenter and land owner, Thomas Lincoln was also known as a "court house man". Records show that he served many times on the Jury in Hardin County. He guarded prisoners and served as a patroller in the northern part of the county. He served his turn working on the roads. And some time during the earlier years he did the carpentry work on the Hardin Thomas log house which the Lincoln Heritage House Committee plans to restore as a tourist attraction on Freeman Lake.

Among his acquaintances at that time was a young woman named Sarah Bush, daughter of pioneer Christopher Bush who is mentioned many times in Haycraft's History of Elizabethtown. At least one biographer, Dr. Louis A. Warren, says Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Bush were sweethearts. However, she married Daniel Johnston, jailer of Hardin County, and Thomas married Nancy Hanks of Washington County, Kentucky.

Many years later both were widowed, and in 1819 Thomas Lincoln returned to Elizabethtown and renewed his courtship of Sarah Bush Johnston. The story is told in the following affidavit made by a nephew of Sarah's.

AFFIDAVIT OF S. H. BUSH.

The affiant, Mr. S. H. Bush, after being duly sworn upon his oath, states:

"My name is SQUIRE H. BUSH. I was born in Hardin County September 30, 1837, and, with the exception of eight years residence at Hodgenville, I have lived in Hardin County all of my life. My father's name was Christopher Bush, Jr., who was one of a family of nine children, and an own brother of Sarah Bush Johnston, who later married Thomas Lincoln, father of President Lincoln."

The affiant further states: "The marriage bond which was issued to Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Bush Johnston was signed by Thomas Lincoln and my father. My 'Aunt Sally' never returned to Kentucky after her marriage to Thomas Lincoln, but my father visited her in their home in Illinois. I have often heard my father tell the story how Thomas Lincoln won the hand of my 'Aunt Sally'. When he came to Elizabethtown from Indiana to see her, he told her that they had known each other for a long time and both had lost their partners, and asked her to marry him. She told him that she could not just then, and when asked the reason why replied that she owed a few small debts which she must pay. Thomas Lincoln asked her how much they were, and after learning, went out and paid off each one of them and they were then married."

Affiant further states: "I am now the only surviving member of a family of twelve children. After serving in the Confederate Army I began the practice of law. My office is in the building next to the one in which Thomas Lincoln married Sarah Bush Johnston, which was built in 1806, and has recently been torn down." (Building stood where the Marion Garage is now located on North Main Street.)

Signed: S. H. Bush, Nephew.

The marriage license of Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Bush Johnston and the marriage bond, signed by Thomas Lincoln and Christopher Bush, are treasured records of the Hardin County Court House. At least three signatures of Thomas Lincoln, treasured by historians, are on file in the court house.

Hardin Co. Enterprise 7/15/70

Thomas Lincoln

THE STEPMOTHER
Sarah Bush Johnston in old age

Sarah wife of Thomas Lincoln
mother